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By Sgt. Edward Eagerton

Alaska National Guard

Alaska Air Guardsmen rescue lost hiker near Skilak Lake

JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska — Airmen with the Alaska Air National Guard's 210th and 212th Rescue Squadrons rescued a lost hiker near Skilak Lake on the Kenai Peninsula Sept. 11.

A group of hikers had been dropped off at Iceberg Lake and were hiking to Skilak Lake when one of the hikers became separated from his party.

Another member of the group contacted the Alaska Rescue Coordination Center via satellite phone for assistance after they could not locate him, explained Lt. Col. John Morse, deputy director of the Alaska RCC.

"He knew to call us first because we have rescue professionals here at the Alaska RCC 24/7," added Senior Master Sgt. Robert Carte, superintendent of the Alaska RCC.

The Alaska RCC contacted the Alaska State Troopers to conduct the mission, but Troopers were unable to execute the mission because they did not have a flight crew available and they are restricted from flying with night vision goggles. Alaska State Troopers requested assistance with the mission.

The Alaska Air National Guard then accepted the mission and dispatched an HH-60 Pave Hawk helicopter from the 210th Rescue Squadron with a team of Guardian Angels from the 212th Rescue Squadron onboard at 7:45 p.m. from Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson.

Guardian Angel teams are highly trained medical personnel made up of a pararescuemen and combat rescue officers who specialize in conducting high-risk rescue missions.

The rescue team located the lost hiker near Skilak Lake, approximately two miles from his party and hoisted him into the HH-60, said Morse. After recovering the man, the crew of the HH-60 picked up his group and flew them all to Central Peninsula Hospital in good condition.

"They did the right thing by calling for help sooner than later," said Morse. "It's always important to take the proper equipment when going out into the wilderness. In this case,

having a satellite phone enabled them to make the call, which shows they properly planned for contingencies.”

For this mission, the 210th and 212th Rescue Squadrons were awarded with one save.

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Editors and Reporters:

For file footage of the Alaska Air National Guard rescue squadrons, please visit:

<http://dvidshub.net/r/qavhbw> for photos and

<https://www.dvidshub.net/video/300963/alaska-national-guard-rescue#.U1V6vbHTmzk> for video.